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Viewing cable 06MANAGUA1534, ARCHBISHOP BRENES SHARES VIEWS ON ELECTIONS,

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06MANAGUA1534**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06MANAGUA1534	2006-07-12 17:38	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 001534

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR A/S SHANNON, WHA/CEN, DRL JFARRAR AND NTONGOUR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/12/2016
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [NU](#) [KCRM](#) [KDEM](#) [KWMN](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: ARCHBISHOP BRENES SHARES VIEWS ON ELECTIONS,
DEMOCRACY

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On June 26, Assistant Secretary Shannon discussed with Archbishop Leopoldo Brenes Solorzano the Archbishop's perspectives on democracy and governance in Nicaragua and the upcoming November 5 elections. Brenes hoped the elections would be fair, peaceful, and inclusive, and voiced concern over the lack of citizen access to the national ID (cedula) required to vote. A/S Shannon reiterated that the USG does not endorse any particular presidential candidate, but is helping Nicaraguans ensure that their elections are fair and transparent. Shannon suggested that the Catholic Church could play a valuable role by promoting voter awareness and encouraging voters to consider the "alternative" candidates. Brenes agreed many Nicaraguans seek new political options rather than the stale offers of Nicaragua's two traditional parties and shared his plan to release an official Church statement in August, urging Nicaraguans to vote, scrutinize each candidate's past, and examine the party platforms. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) During A/S Shannon's meeting with Archbishop Brenes, the Archbishop said he hoped Nicaragua's elections would be fair, peaceful, and inclusive. Brenes, voiced concern over the lack of citizen access to the national ID (cedula), which is required to vote. Brenes said the cedula problem is particularly acute in Matagalpa and Jinotega, where many citizens do not have birth certificates, a prerequisite for cedula. He suggested that priests could use their rapport with parishioners to help citizens obtain their cedula.

¶3. (C) Brenes shared his impression that many Nicaraguans seek political alternatives to the traditional Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC) and Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN). He underscored the Catholic Church's interest in fostering a more educated electorate to help voters make better choices. Brenes shared his plan to release an official Church "Carta Episcopal" in August -- urging Nicaraguans to exercise their right to vote, scrutinize each candidate's past, and examine party platforms.

¶4. (C) Shannon reiterated that the USG does not endorse any presidential candidate, but is helping Nicaraguans ensure that their elections are fair and transparent. To this end, the U.S. is supporting and working with the OAS. Shannon suggested that the Catholic Church could play a valuable role by promoting voter awareness and encouraging voters to consider alternative candidates running for office.

¶5. (SBU) Archbishop Brenes discussed at length the importance of the radio -- which the Sandinistas have

effectively utilized -- as the key communications medium in Nicaraguan society. He explained that Nicaraguans, especially in rural areas, rely on the radio much more than television or newspapers to obtain information -- as evidenced by the presence of a radio in almost every Nicaraguan home. He said the Catholic Church operates Radio Catolica and Radio Maria to inform the public.

¶6. (SBU) With respect to his pastoral duties, Brenes said he is rarely in his office, preferring to dedicate his time at the local parishes where he enjoys direct contact with his people. He said the Catholic Church works hard to achieve a sense of trust and confidence between its priests and their parishioners. Brenes contrasted his own modus operandi with that of many National Assembly delegates who, after being elected, go to Managua and lose contact with the problems of poverty and other concerns of their departments. He hoped that the next group of political leaders would maintain more contact with their constituents and respond to people's needs and concerns.

¶7. (C) Shannon said the United States strives to show its commitment to democracy and human rights in Nicaragua through mutual respect and diplomacy. When queried over the U.S. image in Nicaragua, the Archbishop replied that the U.S. is perceived as "a force commanding respect." USAID programs have done much to build visible good will and created a positive image toward the United States, opined Brenes.

¶8. (SBU) Following his meeting with Shannon, the Archbishop, left for the nearby Santo Domingo Church to celebrate a feast day mass in honor of Opus Dei founder Jose Maria Escriva.

¶9. (U) Participants:

Nicaragua:
Archbishop Leopoldo Jose Brenes Solorzano
Father Raul Zamora, Special Assistant

U.S.:
A/S Thomas A. Shannon
Ambassador Paul Trivelli
Senior Advisor Maria Tamburri
DCM Peter Brennan
Polcouns Victoria Alvarado
Greg Maggio (notetaker)

¶10. (U) Assistant Secretary Tom Shannon cleared on this cable.
TRIVELLI